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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KAWC](#) [HR](#)

SUBJECT: (S) PM SANADER ASKS AMBASSADOR TO INTERVENE WITH  
PRESIDENT ON BEHALF OF INTELLIGENCE DIRECTOR

REF: ZAGREB 02044

Classified By: Ambassador Ralph Frank; Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[11.](#) (S) Summary: PM Sanader and FM Zuzul asked Ambassador Frank and UK Ambassador Ramsden December 1 for assistance in persuading President Mesic to suspend seeking the dismissal of head of the Croatian Counter-Intelligence Agency Podbevsek, stating that his work was critical to the hunt for PIFWC Ante Gotovina. End Summary.

[12.](#) (S) PM Sanader and FM Zuzul invited Ambassador Frank and UK Ambassador John Ramsden to meet December 1 to discuss issues related to the capture of PIFWC Ante Gotovina.

[13.](#) (S) Sanader and Zuzul told the Ambassadors that President Mesic's effort to dismiss Josko Podbevsek, new head of the counter-intelligence agency POA, was interfering in the effort to capture Gotovina. Although President Mesic is trying to portray the Puljiz/Podbevsek case (ref) as being directed against him for political reasons, the investigation is really all about tracking down Gotovina. The GOC has indicted Franjo Turek, a Mesic associate and former head of the POA, because it is convinced he is a valid target who has had telephone conversations with Gotovina. Podbevsek is a critical player in the hunt for Gotovina; Mesic's effort to fire Podbevsek is a blow against that hunt.

[14.](#) (S) Sanader asked the Ambassadors to intervene with Mesic on behalf of Podbevsek. Ambassador Frank and UK Ambassador Ramsden said they could not do so, because it would be directly interfering in Croatia's internal affairs.

[15.](#) (S) Ambassador Frank suggested an alternate approach to the PM: that the PM propose that he and the President make a joint public statement in support of apprehension of Gotovina, and the dedication of all elements of the Government of Croatia to that end. Then it would be up to the PM to make the case to the President that Podbevsek remaining in place would be the key element of that effort.

[16.](#) (S) Comment: Podbevsek, while young (38) and inexperienced, has the PM's confidence on the Gotovina issue, and under his leadership, cooperation with the U.S. and the UK has greatly increased. However, the full range of the PM's persuasive powers will be needed to convince the President of the merit of retaining Podbevsek.  
FRANK

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